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## GEOGRAPHICAL REVIEWS

### THE POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY OF ASIA

H. A. GIBBONS. **The New Map of Asia (1900-1919)**. xiv and 571 pp.; maps, index. The Century Co., New York, 1919. \$2.50. 8½ x 5½ inches.

In the last of his three similarly named books Dr. Gibbons displays in exaggerated form both the excellencies and the defects of "The New Map of Europe" and "The New Map of Africa" (discussed in these pages, *Bull. Amer. Geogr. Soc.*, Vol. 47, 1915, p. 967, and *Geogr. Rev.*, Vol. 6, 1918, p. 379). "The New Map of Asia" is excellent in its plan but careless in its execution; the style is eminently readable, but there are many errors of fact; the outlook is broad but sadly marred by prejudice. The purpose of the book is to give in clear and succinct form a bird's-eye view of the events of the last few decades in Asia and to show how these have led to the present political situation. The author begins with the British possessions in Asia, takes up those of France and of the United States, passes on to Turkey, Persia, and Siberia, and ends with China and Japan. He has the great merit of always writing clearly and of putting things in a way that is not only easy to understand but easy to remember. Perhaps he is unduly fond of exclamation marks, but that is a matter of taste.

In spite of these good qualities the book can hardly be counted a permanent contribution to our knowledge of Asia. In the first place one's confidence in it is shaken by many little errors. For example the author speaks of England as threatening Siberia when he should say Turkestan; he refers to Bokhara as touching India; and, from failure to understand what an enormous barrier Tibet is, he assumes that that country may serve as a possible vantage point from which the combined influence of China and Japan may penetrate India. In view of the fact that the book was prepared hastily to meet the need of the moment such mistakes might be pardoned, although they inevitably cause the thoughtful reader to become suspicious of the whole volume.

A far worse mistake, however, displays itself in the entire structure of the book, namely an attempt to prove a point without regard to the facts. Before giving an example of this, it should be explained that the author's *leitmotif* is "Asia for the Asiatics," while "Down with the League of Nations" comes in as a minor theme. Hence the volume is cleverly constructed so that Asia is rarely blamed, while Europe is constantly held up to scorn. "The white man's burden" is treated with sarcasm after sarcasm. It is perfectly right for an author to take such a viewpoint, but he cannot expect recognition if he lets it distort the facts. Turkey, for example, is discussed with much sympathy, and the pros and cons are stated more fully than in any other case. The chapter on Palestine and Zionism is an admirable and well-balanced argument. But why are the Armenian massacres reduced to an incidental reference or two and to the absurd misstatement that they occurred "because the Armenians were in the path to the Caspian Sea"? Japan, too, is handled tenderly, and, while a few words of disapproval are her lot for events in Korea and Shantung, the net result is an impression that her foreign policy is "excellent and wise."

The way England is treated seems almost to indicate that the writer has a personal antipathy for the British. A few sentences will show how far the book goes in distorting the truth. "The average life of the Indian is twenty-three years; of the Englishman, forty years; of the New Zealander, sixty years." Every intelligent person knows that the difference between India and England is due to climate, while the difference between England and New Zealand is due to the fact that New Zealand is full of young, strong colonists. The old people stay at home. Yet our author would have us believe that the difference in the death rate between India and England is due to British misgovernment. Again: "In 1850 the average earning of an Indian was four cents a day. This sum fell to three cents a day in 1882 and to one and a half cents a day in 1900." In quoting this statement from some Hindu propagandist, as he probably did, Dr. Gibbons pays no heed to the fact that since 1850 the value of Indian money has increased because of the introduction of the gold standard. Even so, however, the reviewer does not believe that the statement is true, and it is ridiculous in the sense that Dr. Gibbons implies. His implication is that the average Indian today lives on scarcely more than a third of what he lived on in 1850, and this because of English misrule. Such a reduction in the standard of living would mean the death of most of the population. Once more: "The majority of the population of India goes through life without ever having enough to eat." The truth is that they have enough to eat most of the time, although,

as in practically all tropical countries, a large proportion suffer at some time during their lives. "This state of affairs did not exist before England started to drain India of her wealth. It exists in no other portion of the world's surface. It does not exist in neighboring equally densely populated countries that are not directly under British rule." It would be hard to find more untruth packed into seven consecutive sentences than in those here quoted.

ELLSWORTH HUNTINGTON

#### THE PHYSIOGRAPHY OF A REGION NEAR MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

CHARLES FENNER. *The Physiography of the Werribee River Area*. Maps, diagrs., bibliogr. *Proc. Royal Soc. of Victoria*, Vol. 31 (N. S.), 1918, Part I, pp. 176-313. Melbourne.

A large part of Victoria, the southeasternmost political subdivision of Australia, consists of a well-developed peneplain, recently deformed and now more or less dissected. An embayment of the southern coast, known as Port Philip, near the head of which stands Melbourne, the capital city, occupies part of a depressed area, or "sunkland," which is adjoined on the east, north, and west by moderately uplifted blocks, separated from the sunkland and from each other by fault scarps. This district has more than a local interest, as it was crossed by the members of the British Association during the peripatetic colonial meeting of August, 1914, on their way by rail between Melbourne and Adelaide and was afterwards more closely examined by the geologists and geographers of the party on an excursion from Melbourne under excellent guidance. The careful study subsequently made by Fenner of the Werribee River area, here reviewed, includes the western part of the sunkland and the uplifted blocks on the north and west. It summarizes the work of previous observers, adds many new details, and gives evidence of the complete acclimatization of modern physiographic methods in the antipodes.

The Victorian peneplain truncates an extensive ancient mountain system of greatly deformed and mostly resistant slates, sandstones, and quartzites with accompanying gneisses and granites. The surface of the peneplain is here and there surmounted by granitic monadnocks, as well as by occasional volcanic cones of later origin, from which basaltic lava flows are spread over large areas; but the general inequalities of the surface are so small that the existing relief is almost entirely due to the recent displacements of the peneplain blocks, some of which now stand 6,000 feet above sea level, and to the erosion of young valleys in the elevated blocks, especially near their scarped margins. The "Great Dividing Range," represented on most maps with mountainous form trending east and west about 100 miles inland from the coast, has in reality no strongly marked culminating crest but is simply a broadly up-arched part of the peneplain, from which the streams flow north to the dry continental interior and south to the ocean.

Especial attention is given by Fenner to the district traversed by the Melbourne-Adelaide railway as it passes from the western part of the sunkland—the Bacchus marsh area—to the adjacent upland, the ascent being made to the middle one of three blocks, because it is less elevated than its neighbors on the north and south. The slope bounding these blocks on the east is ascribed to a fault, trending east of north, 30 miles in length and with an average displacement of 800 feet. Near the railway a large area of the sunkland and a smaller area of the uplifted block, as well as the strong slope between them, are covered by a lava sheet, from which it is inferred that the lava outpouring preceded the block faulting and that the fault hereabouts probably consists of a number of small steplike displacements. Both the sunkland and the uplifted block are nearly level at altitudes of 500 and 1,300 feet. The railway climbs the greater part of the slope between them by making a strong loop to the south and finishes the ascent in a long cut by which the lava is well exposed. The Werribee River descends from the upland near the railway in steep-walled clefts, 800 feet deep near the scarp, in which the deformed rocks beneath the lavas are well seen. A number of minor streams incise short ravines in the fault slope and deposit "aprons" of alluvium on the lower ground.

The interpretation of this district, so well argued by Fenner, has a special physiographic interest because at the time of the British Association visit the possibility that the upland on the west had been raised above the lowland by faulting was looked upon with much incredulity by certain British geologists of limited physiographic experience, although it was accepted by their Australian guides. It is to be hoped that they may see Fenner's paper. This recalls the amusing experience on the western excursion of the International Geological Congress of 1891 in the United States—physiographic principles being then less understood than now—when several eminent European members of the party, on being led by Gilbert to see some faulted alluvial fans at the base of the Wasatch Range near Salt Lake City, mutinied against the wild American